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NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests

NASS TIMBER SUPPLY ANALYSIS RELEASED

VICTORIA – A new timber supply analysis of the Nass timber supply area indicates the annual harvest level may need to be reduced, B.C. chief forester Larry Pedersen announced today.

"This harvest forecast isn't an allowable annual cut determination," said Pedersen. "It's technical information I will consider when setting a new allowable annual cut later this year."

The analysis forecasts a harvest level of 820,000 cubic metres per year for 10 years, a 28 per cent decrease from the current allowable annual cut. The harvest level is projected to decline by a further 10 per cent per decade until eventually reaching a long-term level of 407,000 cubic metres per year.

The current allowable annual cut for the Nass timber supply area was set in 2000 at 1.142 million cubic metres to reflect land transferred out of the area under the Nisga'a Treaty.

The actual average harvest level over the past four years was 553,000 cubic metres per year, well below the projected harvest level of 820,000 cubic metres per year. As a result, the impact of a reduced harvest level on employment and area mills may not be severe, a socio-economic report included in the analysis suggests.

The main reason for the projected decline in the harvest level is the removal of the Upper Nass area from the timber harvesting land base. The Upper Nass, which makes up about one-quarter of the Nass timber supply area, is not expected to be economically accessible for timber harvesting.

A public review period begins today with the release of the Nass analysis and the public discussion paper. This allows the public to comment on the Nass timber supply review before the chief forester determines a new allowable annual cut later this year. Public input will be accepted until July 30.

"Comments from the public review will be considered along with the analysis when I set the new allowable annual cut," said Pedersen.

The Nass timber supply area covers about 1.6 million hectares in the northwest. It is remote and sparsely populated. Communities within and near the area include Stewart, Meziadin, Elsworth camp, Nass camp, Van Dyke camp, Gitlakdamix, Gitwinksihlkw, Lakalzap, Kitwanga, Gitwanga, Gitanyow and Kitwancool.

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Since the last timber supply analysis, new information has been collected. As well, changes in forest management policy for the Nass timber supply area have been put in place, including the Forest Practices Code. The code sets out standards designed to maintain such things as biodiversity, old-growth forest and habitat for at-risk wildlife.

The timber supply analysis report is also summarized in a public discussion paper. Both documents are available at the Ministry of Forests Web site at http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/tsb and at the following Forest Service offices:

- Kalum forest district, 250-638-5100
- Prince Rupert forest region, 250-847-7500

A timber supply review is undertaken independently by the chief forester for each timber supply area every five years. The review provides an up-to-date assessment of timber supply in each of B.C.'s 37 timber supply areas and 34 tree farm licences, based on the best available information and current management practices.

For more information on the timber supply review, visit our Web site at http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/tsb on the Internet.

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